

# Iowa Department of Human Services

## Offer #401-HHS-008: Successful Transition to Adulthood

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<b>This offer is for:</b>		<b>This offer includes the following appropriations:</b>
	New activity	Child and Family Services, General Administration
<b>X</b>	Status quo existing activity	
	Improve existing activity	

### **Result(s) Addressed:**

#### **Primary Results**

- **Provide support to youth who have left foster care at age 18, so they can more successfully transition to adult living**
  - Improve Quality of Life
    - Safe and Healthy Living Environment for children, persons with special needs and vulnerable populations
  - Enhancing Community Safety and Promoting Equality in our Justice System
    - Community Involvement
      - Youth Development
      - Reduce Substance Abuse
  - Improving Student Achievement
  - Transform Iowa's Economy
    - Develop an Educated, Productive Workforce

### **Program Description:**

The purpose of the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program is to ensure that youth in foster care are better prepared for the challenges and opportunities that adulthood presents and that resources invested while they are young pay off over the long term.

#### **Who:**

##### Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program

PAL serves Iowa youth who leave state paid foster care at the age of 18 or older and who are no longer eligible for voluntary foster care and who are engaged full-time in one or some combination of the following:

- Enrollment in a postsecondary educational training program or work training
- Employment

Approximately 550 youth in Iowa reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday while in foster care; that is, they are neither adopted nor reunited with their birth families by the time they reach 18 or placed in a permanent family through adoption or guardianship.

Currently, children are eligible to continue in foster care on a voluntary basis past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday only when they are still working toward their high school diploma or GED and meet one of the following conditions.

- Through age 18 if they are living in family foster care.
- Through age 19 if they are living in a supervised apartment setting.
- If the youth is at imminent risk of being homeless.

### **What:**

The PAL program provides financial support to eligible youth who are receiving aftercare services. Aftercare services include case management support and services linking youth to community resources to assist them in their transition to self-sufficiency.

### **How:**

Youth enrolled in Iowa's PAL Program are eligible for additional financial support via a monthly stipend based upon the foster family basic daily maintenance rate for a youth aged 16 or over, as well as aftercare case management services. The amount of the stipend depends on a youth's earned and unearned income. Youth eligible for a PAL stipend must have left state paid foster care at the age of 18 or older, not be eligible for voluntary foster care and be engaged in a full-time activity in one or some combination of the following:

- Enrollment in a postsecondary educational training program or work training
- Employment

Youth receive PAL aftercare services in addition to the stipend through a contractual arrangement with a network of child welfare providers (known as the Iowa Aftercare Services Network). The primary goal of the program is for youth to achieve self-sufficiency through youth driven goals and to recognize and accept their personal responsibility for the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

### **Other Transition to Adulthood Programs Not Included in this Offer**

The following are other programs related to transition to adulthood that are funded with state and federal dollars outside this offer.

#### *elevate*<sup>TM</sup>

*elevate*<sup>TM</sup> provides, through local chapters, a forum for current and former foster care youth to connect with peers, develop leadership skills and advocate for improvements in the child welfare system. There are currently eight chapters across the state. There are currently about 200 members. Funding is from state and Chafee dollars. The state funds are within *Offer #401-HHS-007 Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice Community Services*.

#### Aftercare Services

DHS Aftercare program provides support and services to youth and young adults ages 18 to 21 that have exited foster care, but are not participating in PAL as well as those that are in PAL. Eleven agencies participate in a statewide network that provides services. At the end of SFY 2008, 114 youth were in the Aftercare program (an additional 279 youth were participating in the PAL

component). DHS also funds ongoing evaluation of the program. Aftercare is funded with federal funds from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

#### Education & Training Vouchers (ETV)

This program provides financial assistance vouchers for youth that age out of foster care or who were adopted/entered a subsidized guardianship arrangement after the age of 16. The program provided 198 youth a total of \$767,294 in training and education vouchers in SFY 2008. The ETV program is funded by Federal funds from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

#### All Iowa Opportunity Foster Care Grant Program

This program provides financial assistance for youth that age out of foster care and attend post-secondary education in Iowa. The program provided 99 youth a total of \$477,394 for post secondary education in SFY 2008. The program is administered by the Iowa Student Aid Commission and is funded with state funds.

#### Medicaid for Independent Young Adults (MIYA)

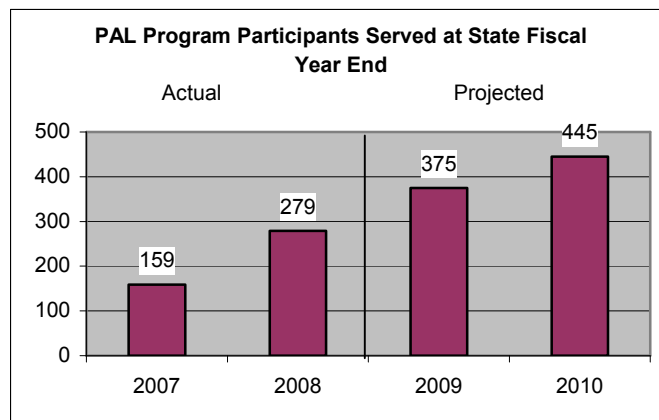
The purpose of the MIYA program is to provide continued health care coverage to young adults transitioning from state care to young adulthood. Youth covered by the MIYA program receive the same services, as any other child under 21, who is eligible for Medicaid through existing Medicaid provider networks. Youth transitioning out of foster care are automatically reviewed for MIYA eligibility without filing a new Medicaid application. MIYA currently provides Medicaid coverage to 439 eligible youth in SFY 2008 who are: under age 21, were in a state paid foster care placement when they turned age 18, left foster care on or after May 1, 2006, and have countable income under 200% of the Federal poverty level. The state funds are within *Offer #401-HHS-003 Medical Services*.

### **Offer Description:**

#### **Today's Activities and Results:**

This offer continues the PAL program for youth under age 21 who were in a state paid foster care placement when they turned age 18 and meet eligibility criteria on or after May 1, 2006.

We anticipate average monthly enrollment in PALS will continue to increase in both SFY 2009 and 2010, because youth entering the program in SFY 2008 and SFY 2009 are eligible to continue in the program while new youth will be eligible in SFY 2010. The following chart shows enrollment trends since the program began in SFY 2007.



The Youth Policy Institute routinely collects results data from Aftercare Service Network providers about PAL program participants. This data indicates that PAL program participants show increases in safe and stable housing; enrollment in school, college, GED or job training program; employment; and monthly budget.

### **Reprioritization:**

In order to continue to provide services at our current service level, it is necessary to reprioritize our current budget obligations. As a result, this offer would continue the maximum PAL payment rate at the SFY 2009 level.

### **Improved Results Activities:**

There are no specific budget requests focused on improved results.

### **Offer Justification:**

#### **Legal Requirements:**

##### **Federal:**

Federal requirements related to foster care are contained in Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, especially the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.

##### **State:**

State requirements related to foster care are found in Chapters 232 and 234 of the Iowa Code and 441 IAC 187.

#### **Rationale:**

The PAL program ensures that youth leaving foster care at the age of 18 are better prepared for the challenges and opportunities that adulthood presents and that resources invested while they were in foster care pay off over the long term. Although technically adults, these youth face significant challenges. Often they are developmentally behind their peers. These youth need the same, if not significantly more emotional and educational/employment support than most other young adults need when they head out on their own.

Without additional assistance, too many are neither employed nor in school, have children that they are not able to parent, suffer from persistent mental illness or substance abuse disorders, find themselves without basic necessities, become homeless, or end up involved with the criminal justice system.

#### **Improve Iowans' Health**

- Safe and healthy living environment for children, persons with special needs and vulnerable populations

Up to 25% of youth transitioning out of Iowa's foster care system experience homelessness within their first year after discharge. Continued support and services provides youth who transition out of foster care with a safe and healthy living environment.

- Strengthen and support families

Many of the youth that transition out of foster care have been in care many years and lack positive stable relationships with family members or other significant adults. Many have had

multiple placements and have experienced multiple separations. Studies have found that many of these youth act out their loneliness and isolation in self-destructive ways or through aggression towards others. PAL provides support to connect youth to supportive adults in the community.

#### Enhancing Community Safety

- Community Involvement–Youth Development

Chapin Hall found that youth who were discharged from foster care at age 18 were 1.5 times more likely to be arrested and 2 times more likely to be convicted of a crime than youth who continued in care. The PAL program provides the necessary services and support, including financial, and most importantly, connection with a positive support system, that when lacking, often is a root cause of conviction of a crime.

- Ready-to-Learn Students

Many foster care youth approach the transition to adulthood with significant educational deficits. Over one-third of the young people in a Chapin Hall study had received neither a high school diploma nor a GED, compared to fewer than 10 percent of their same-age peers. The PAL program, providing additional financial support in addition to case management support and services after age 18 significantly increases their ability to further their education past high school/GED. Chapin Hall found that youth who continued to receive care were enrolled in 2 and 4-year colleges at 3 times the rate of youth who had been discharged at age 18.

- Secure and Nurturing Families

Many of the youth transitioning from foster care are unable to turn to their parents or other family members for financial and/or emotional support. Services and supports through the PAL program offer youth the ability to effectively deal with what their biological families are often unable to give by providing them effective, positive alternatives for financial and/or emotional support and by linking them to community resources, including positive adult mentors.

#### Transform Iowa's Economy

- Develop an Educated, Productive Workforce

Services and support through the PAL program for this population of youth once they exit foster care provides for better employment skills and employment opportunities, leading to resources necessary for self-sufficiency as adults.

**Results:**

<b>Result:</b>	<b>SFY 2008 Actual Level</b>	<b>SFY 2009 Budget Level</b>	<b>SFY 2010 Offer Level</b>
Average monthly number of youth participating in PAL	204	260*	413

\* The SFY 2009 PAL state appropriation is insufficient to serve all eligible youth. The \$2.8 million appropriation would have funded a maximum average of 260 youth per month. Participation at SFY 2008 year-end (279) already exceeded that number and would have required an immediate PAL waiting list. To offset the shortfall and delay a waiting list, DHS diverted federal funding and funds for provider performance incentives to cover additional PAL participants.